

Appl. No. : 09/669,805
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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Kindly amend the claims as follows:

1. Cancelled

2. (Previously presented) A method comprising:

hosting an Internet auction for an item on a first computer connected to the Internet;

allowing placing bids for amounts to purchase said item from a second computer, connected to the Internet; and

storing information on the second computer about an amount that will be required to overcome any current bids on the item, which information indicative of the amount that will be required to overcome any current bids cannot be viewed by a user of the second computer, but which information allows local determination, at the second computer, of whether an entered bid is higher than a current bid amount without contacting said first computer.

3. (Previously Cancelled)

4. (Previously Cancelled)

5. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 2 wherein said bids include an indication of time and date, and said placing comprises providing bids to an

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agent program, which keeps the amounts of the bids secret until a time of day and date that is specified by the indication associated with the bid.

6. (Previously Cancelled)

7. (Withdrawn) A method of conducting an auction on the Internet, comprising:

on a computer connected to the Internet, first hosting a first portion of the auction in a mode where users view an item, and a price for the item, in a manner in which users can place bids on items, and in which a current highest bid can be requested by another computer connected to the internet; and

second hosting a second portion of the auction in an interactive manner, in which the auction participants place real time bids, which real time bids are seen automatically by other participants in the auction.

8. (Previously Cancelled)

9. (Previously Cancelled)

10. (Previously Cancelled)

11. (Previously Cancelled)

12. (Previously Cancelled)

13. (Previously presented) A method of automated auction bidding, comprising:

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on a first computer connected to the Internet, hosting an auction which allows a plurality of users at remote locations, that are remote from a location of said first computer, to bid on an item, where one of the plurality of users has a highest bid which represents a maximum amount that the one user is willing to pay, and at least one other of the plurality of users can bid an amount that exceeds said highest bid, said first computer displaying a current winning amount, which is an amount that exceeds all the other bids on the item, but which may be less than, or the same as, said highest bid, depending on a relationship between said highest bid and said all the other bids, and said first computer not displaying said highest bid, and not displaying a minimum bid amount that will be required to exceed said highest bid; and

enabling a quick bid whereby a user can automatically bid an amount which will exceed the highest bid with a single click .

14. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 13 wherein there are a plurality of bids, some of which are known and others of which are secret, and wherein said quick bid only overcomes those bids which are known.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 14 wherein said plurality of bids includes a plurality of bids, associated with times when those maximum bids can be made, and only those bids whose times have been reached are known.

16. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 15 further comprising enabling an action which allows determining both secret bids and non-secret bids.

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17. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 16 wherein said action includes an extra fee beyond that which would be charged for only non-secret bids.

18. (Previously Presented) A system, comprising:
a server running a program that displays information about an item to be auctioned, and accepts bids on said item, and keeps track of a maximum bid; and
a client, enabling and sending a bid to said server with a single click which includes an amount of a bid.

19. (Previously Presented) The system as in claim 18, wherein said server automatically updates at least one screen being seen on at least one client to automatically show new bid amounts.

20. (Previously Presented) The system as in claim 18, wherein said client allows sending a plurality of bids, to be executed at a plurality of times.

21. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 13, wherein an amount of said quick bid is displayed responsive to a specified action by the user.

22. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 2, wherein said auction is one in which the server stores maximum bid amounts by users, but only displays a current bid amount without displaying said maximum bid amount, and wherein said

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values stored at said second computer determines whether an entered bid is higher than said maximum bid amounts.

23. (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 7, in which users can not view information about other bidders in the auction during said first portion of the auction, but can view information about other bidders on the auction during said second part of the auction.

24 (Withdrawn) The method as in claim 7 wherein said second portion comprises displaying information on client bidders who are currently bidding on the auction.

25. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
on a first computer connected to the Internet, hosting an Internet auction for at least one item;
accepting bids on said at least one item from at least one other computer, connected to said first computer, and displaying a current price for the item on said other computer, and keeping secret a current maximum bid which has been placed for the item from a user of said other computer; and
displaying an icon on said other computer which allows a bid to be placed without contacting said first computer, wherein said icon enables placing a bid which is high enough to exceed said current maximum bid, and

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in said second computer, determining whether an entered bid is higher than said secret maximum bid amount, and informing a user at said second computer without contacting said first computer.

26. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 25, further comprising running an applet on said second computer, which includes information enabling determining whether an entered bid is higher than said maximum bid.

27. Cancelled

28. (cancelled)

29. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 25, wherein said icon allows said bid to be placed using a single click.